

## **Confluence Parkway Project Development Background White Paper**

### **North Wenatchee Corridor Planning History of Alternatives Considered**

#### **Introduction**

The City of Wenatchee and the Region have been working on regional transportation solutions dating back to the 50's and 60's anticipating growth of the valley. Planning for and solving transportation needs is particularly challenging given the topography and the rivers. As a result, the valley transportation backbone takes on a radial or looped pattern. Over the last 15 years, North Wenatchee Avenue is the largest bottleneck in our valley with the greatest number of cars experiencing congestion on a daily basis.

Over the past 10 years, transportation planners and local governments have been reviewing alternatives with the public through the Chelan Douglas Transportation Council. Many alternatives have been considered leading to the conclusion of Confluence Parkway as the preferred solution to existing and growing traffic congestion on North Wenatchee Avenue. In particular this work has been publicized and adopted in the [North Wenatchee Avenue Transportation Master Plan \(2011\)](#) and [North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment \(2017\)](#). Since the adoption of the plan in 2011, continued refinement and study of this solution has brought the project to the point where we are today with the formal initiation of NEPA. NEPA was formally initiated on July 19, 2019 after extensive consultation with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Based on a thorough review of all the planning work summarized in this narrative and site visits to the project, the FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Wenatchee (City) have determined that the appropriate path for environmental review is the development of an Environmental Assessment (EA).

One of the more frequently asked questions about a project of this magnitude is whether alternatives have been considered. The answer is, yes, several alternatives have been considered and evaluated extensively to determine if they meet the purpose and need for North Wenatchee. The screening criteria described below were an integral part of evaluating the alternatives and soliciting input from the community. The criteria formed the basis of the Purpose and Need Statement (May 2019, attached) for the Confluence Parkway Project, which was developed to support the current NEPA process.

The objective of this narrative is to provide a summary of the alternatives considered and the results of each screening evaluation point. Given that Confluence Parkway has emerged as the only alternative meeting the purpose and need for the project, the EA process evaluates the build versus no build alternative from an environmental impact standpoint.

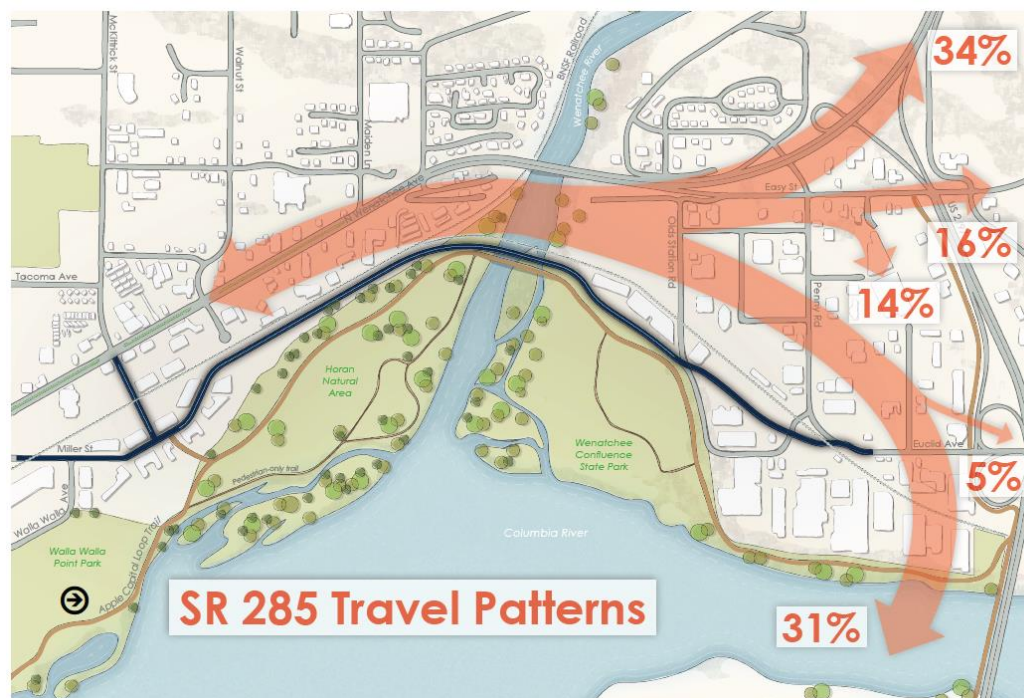
#### **Screening Criteria:**

Over the years of study, dating back to the work performed for the 2011 North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan, screening criteria have been developed to provide the cornerstone for considering alternatives and are reflected in the project's purpose and need. These criteria have evolved and solidified over time based on planning and input from the public. For example, after the 2015 Sleepy Hollow Fires, it became evident that the City of Wenatchee needed another

evacuation/emergency vehicle route during emergencies such as this wildfire disaster in which the entire city was in jeopardy of burning. This event provided further justification and support for the Confluence Parkway alternative as a bypass.

The criteria described below are intended to focus the evaluation of alternatives on key elements of the project. In no particular order, the following screening criteria are the basis to objectively identify whether an alternative can solve the problem at hand. If these criteria cannot be met, then the alternative is deemed not viable.

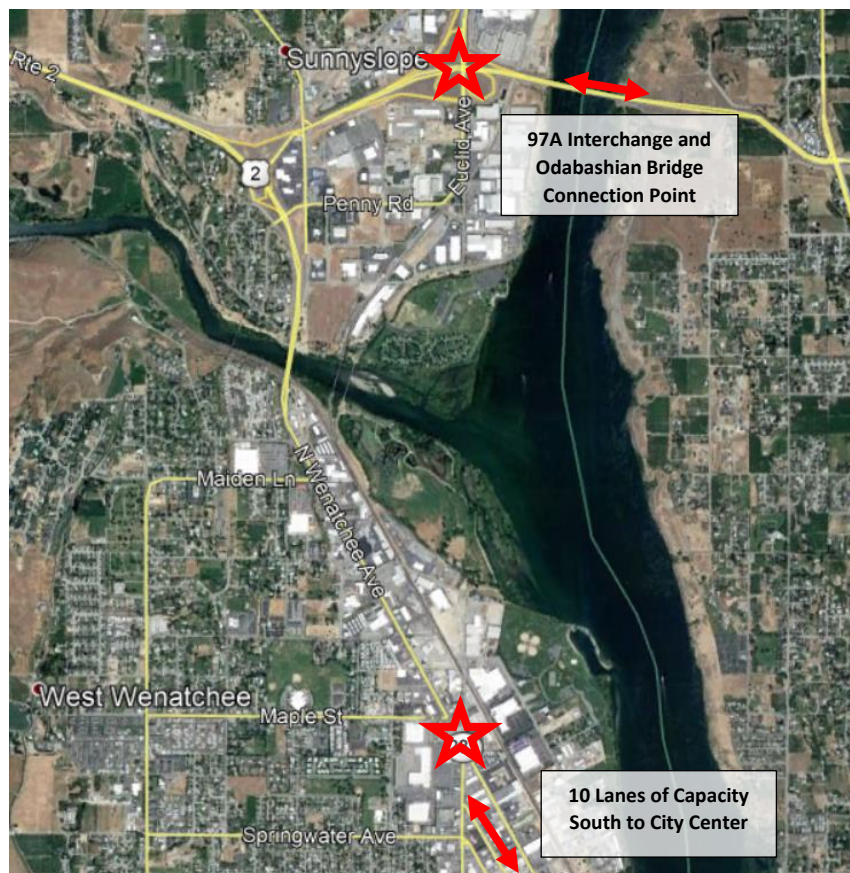
1. **Traffic Volume, capacity need, and mobility** drives the traffic solution to congestion for the North Wenatchee area. The current traffic volume on North Wenatchee Avenue is 40,000 vehicles per day crossing the Wenatchee River Bridge with growth expected to approach approx. 60,000 vehicles per day in the 20 year planning horizon. North Wenatchee Avenue is currently experiencing level of service failure at peak times of the day, with delays at key intersections backups at key intersections. Transportation capacity not only includes traffic, but it addresses ensuring that transit service is efficient and effective, as well as pedestrian and bicycle use. The following figure illustrates projected origins and destinations of traffic in and out of N. Wenatchee.



*Projected Traffic Volumes depicting origins and destinations of trips*

Mobility is about being able to get to the origins and destinations efficiently. If the traffic mobility is not achieved, then associated alternatives are considered fatally flawed. Traffic mobility solutions are evaluated using the Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council regional traffic model in which regional growth patterns and infrastructure investments are included in developing traffic volume and destination projections. Principally, there are a combined 10 north-south travel lanes on North and South Mission Street, North and South Chelan Avenue,

and North and South Wenatchee Avenue from Miller Street south to the city center. There are only 4 lanes on SR 285 (Wenatchee Avenue) north of North Miller Street to the Wenatchee River bridges and the US 2 – SR 285 interchange in Olds Station. Given the traffic volume growth in East Wenatchee and Douglas County and given that the Odabashian Bridge across the Columbia River has extra traffic carrying capacity, the traffic solution needs to fill the gap by providing additional lane capacity that connects the Odabashian Bridge with the existing 10 lanes located at Miller Street. North Wenatchee Avenue is currently the most congested section of the Apple Capital Loop (Odabashian Bridge, SR 28, George Sellar Bridge, SR 285) which is backbone to the valley's transportation system. Presently, good access exists for upper valley traffic (Cashmere – Leavenworth) and poor access exists to 97A and Odabashian Bridge. Connecting the two points as shown below is the key to developing a successful transportation solution in the North Wenatchee area.



*Connecting the Two Stars with a Bypass is the Key to Mobility*



2. **Safety** improvements are needed on North Wenatchee Avenue in its current form. North Wenatchee Avenue has the highest traffic accident rates in the city. Any traffic mobility alternative will need to improve or at the very least not degrade the safe operation of North Wenatchee Avenue. Safety includes addressing vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit safety which is inclusive of all modes of transportation is particularly challenging in an urban environment due to conflicts between through traffic and destination traffic as well as bikes and pedestrians. Safety also directly relates to traffic capacity and mobility. Accidents cause severe congestion and backups impacting all modes of traffic and emergency vehicles. Finally, given the proximity of North Wenatchee Avenue to the BNSF railroad mainline, the project needs to ensure that safety to and from the waterfront from North Wenatchee Avenue is addressed.



3. **Emergency Access** during a significant event such as a wildfire disaster has proven to be a need based on the Sleepy Hollow Wildfire event in which North Wenatchee Avenue was blocked in 2015 during this disaster. Emergency access not only allows for timely evacuation, but also provides for improved emergency services response time. Emergency access is also very

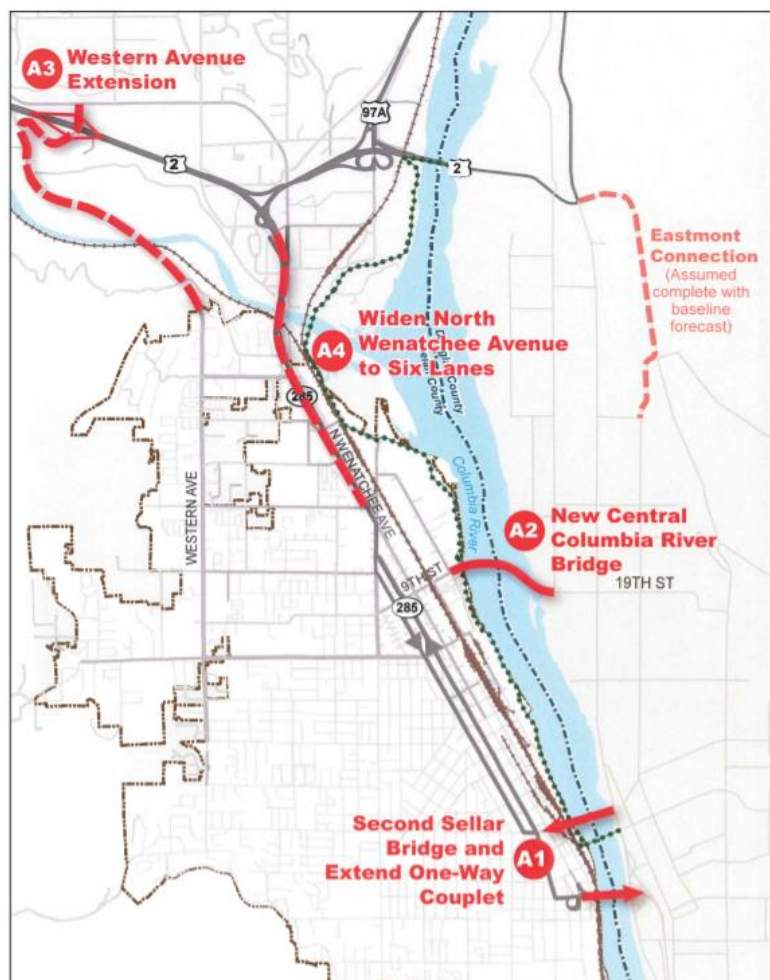
important in serving the medical facilities in the city. During high traffic congestion periods, delays to aid vehicles impact medical emergency outcomes while patients are being transported to the hospital located in the heart of the city.

4. **Economic Vitality** needs to be sustained or improved in the North Wenatchee area. Presently approximately 1/3 of all retail activity occurs in the North Wenatchee Business district which is largely an auto oriented business district in a long narrow corridor leading to the city center. As the economy of retail and Wenatchee changes over time, transportation investments are needed to support the economy to ensure business is not limited due to transportation congestion. Additionally, the North Wenatchee Avenue corridor has limited land availability given the constraints caused by the BNSF railroad mainline and the residential development to the west and thus transportation investments need to support the vision for the City identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan which promotes efficient land use.
5. **Enhancing** the community as a quality place to live is the final principle that has been considered in the evaluation of alternatives. In other words, any solution has the potential to create impacts which opens the doors to opportunities through mitigation.
6. **Cost and Engineering Feasibility** in the context of project magnitude in terms of costs and physical feasibility of building is a key criteria of any project. As a matter of sound engineering and fiscal responsibility, the region has limited potential to generate transportation revenue for large projects that serve the greater area. These projects are funded through state transportation funds and occasionally federal grants. Large federal grants have not typically been used in the Wenatchee Valley; however, given the growth of the urban area, these funding sources are also being considered. Any alternative that costs well in excess of what reasonably can be expected in terms of revenue for this region is deemed not feasible and thus would not go forward as a potential alternative.

In the course of evaluating alternatives through planning processes including the North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan (2011), the CDTC Regional Transportation Plan, the North Wenatchee Master Plan (2016), the North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment (2017), and the City's Comprehensive Plan, the above criteria were applied. Evaluating alternatives also takes into account the public process and outcomes of decision makers and decision making bodies such as the Wenatchee City Council and the Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council. Ultimately if an alternative does not have the support of these decision making bodies support and if a project does not have overarching public support, then it fails.

## Initial Alternatives Screening

Evaluating options for addressing traffic congestion began in 2008 with an initial analysis of options to address traffic congestion on North Wenatchee Avenue. This work was important in informing the development of the North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan and helped identify the appropriate transportation screening criteria as outlined above. The high level analysis looked at options which ultimately did not solve the transportation problem on North Wenatchee Avenue. These options are depicted below. Out of this analysis, it became evident that a parallel corridor to North Wenatchee Avenue was necessary to meet the transportation mobility need. The North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment, Appendix A provides a concise review of this high level review of regional solutions.



Source:  
Transpo, North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan (2010)

**Figure A-1**  
Initial Concepts Considered in  
North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan

*Figure from Appendix A of the North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment (2017)*  
*Initial Alternatives Screening for North Wenatchee Avenue*

**Table A-2. Initial Concepts Considered in North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan**

Concept	Description	Analysis	Recommendations
<b>Second Sellar Bridge and Extend One-Way Couplet</b>	Construct a new 3-lane bridge approximately one-half mile north of the existing Sellar Bridge to serve only westbound traffic. The existing Sellar Bridge would be converted to a 3-lane bridge serving only eastbound traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would not provide significant improvements to North Wenatchee Avenue or along Western Avenue</li> </ul>	Not recommended for further analysis because it would not meet the plan's objectives.
<b>New Central Columbia River Bridge</b>	Construct a new 4-lane bridge (two lanes each direction) between Wenatchee (east end of 9th Street) and East Wenatchee (west end of 19th Street).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would provide alternative route to North Wenatchee Avenue</li> <li>Would help reduce traffic volumes in the vicinity of Maiden Lane and Horse Lake Road</li> <li>Would not fully resolve key issues of throughput, travel speeds, or safety in the corridor due to changes in travel patterns and "induced" traffic</li> </ul>	Not recommended for further analysis because it would not meet the plan's objectives.
<b>New Wenatchee River Bridge and Western Avenue Extension</b>	Construct a new 2-lane bridge over the Wenatchee River beginning at the north end of the Western Avenue corridor, winding down to the river, and climbing back up to a new interchange with US 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements would slightly reduce volumes and delays in North Wenatchee Avenue corridor, but would not resolve key mobility and accessibility issues, and would not serve planned growth in Olds Station and Sunnyslope areas.</li> <li>Traffic destined for bridge would create impacts along Western Avenue.</li> <li>Steep terrain between Western Avenue, the Wenatchee River, and US 2 would make this concept technically challenging and expensive.</li> </ul>	Not recommended at this location because of limited benefits and high cost; however, a bypass farther east may warrant exploration.
<b>Widen North Wenatchee Avenue to six lanes</b>	Widen North Wenatchee Avenue and the existing bridges to six lanes from Miller Street to north of the Wenatchee River. Medians would restrict left turns to/from driveways. Left turns and U-turns would be allowed at major intersections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening would increase capacity but would displace businesses and parking along North Wenatchee Avenue, significantly affecting existing and future development in the corridor.</li> <li>Wider roadway cross-section and higher traffic volumes would increase safety risks for pedestrians and bicyclists.</li> <li>Extensive access management and traffic control would be required to fully utilize the new capacity and to improve safety.</li> </ul>	Not recommended for further analysis due to displacement, economic development, and safety concerns; however, improvements to maximize the existing capacity could be considered.

*Initial Alternatives Screening from the North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment (2017), Appendix A. Work completed prior to the 2011 North Wenatchee Avenue Transportation Master Plan.*



After the initial screening of alternatives, the planning process identified that the only solution to solving congestion and mobility problems on North Wenatchee Avenue was to develop a parallel route, sometimes referred to as a bypass route. Numerous options for a bypass route were evaluated with Confluence Parkway emerging as the only corridor meeting the purpose and need. Further analysis of this corridor was performed associated with the North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment (Risk Assessment) completed in 2017 in which more detailed engineering was applied to help develop a preliminary understanding of the project impacts to the sensitive park and natural areas near the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers. This section of this report provides an overview of alternatives considered for a parallel route.





Alternative Concept	Description	Analysis	Screening Outcome
<p>1 – Widen North Wenatchee Ave.</p> <p>This alternative was re-evaluated in the 2017 Risk Assessment even though it was screened out in the 2011 North Wenatchee Ave. Transportation Master Plan.</p>	<p>Widens the existing 5 lane section to 7 lanes. Includes construction of new Wenatchee River Bridge</p>	<p>Mobility is only marginally improved with extra lanes due to side friction of business access and it does not connect directly to the Odabashian Bridge and 97A interchange. Traffic volume and capacity increases are not as great as a bypass. Adding additional lanes generally degrades safety urban environment. This alternative does not provide a secondary north access for emergency services. Costs for widening N. Wenatchee Ave. Widening also harms business district viability and damages many existing businesses. Widening is counter to the City Comprehensive Plan and North Wenatchee Redevelopment Plan. The cost of widening and adding a new bridge is within the same magnitude of other bypass options and it is feasible from a geometrics standpoint.</p>	<p>This alternative is not considered as viable alternative due to the failure to meet the screening criteria and is not consistent with the purpose and need.</p>
<p>2 – Bypass along West Side of BSNF RR Tracks.</p>	<p>Creates a new two lane bypass between Miller Street and SR 285/Easy St off ramp. Includes new North Wen. Bridge and a Flyover the RR tracks near the Wenatchee River.</p>	<p>This bypass option does improve traffic carry capacity by providing an uninterrupted flow of traffic without business access. This alternative fails to connect the Miller Street area directly with the Odabashian Bridge and 97A interchange and worsens level of service and safety at US 2/Easy Street. This option provides safety improvements along the N. Wenatchee Ave. corridor by separating through traffic from business destined traffic. There is only marginal benefit for emergency access given it still concentrates traffic in Olds Station limiting its evacuation capacity effectiveness and thus fails to meet emergency access objectives. A bypass route in this location fails to support economic vitality due to damages and complete takes of a number of businesses including a school, hotel, several storage facilities, and other businesses with facilities along the tracks. This option also fails to provide a new front door to the waterfront or solve waterfront access issues as defined in the North Wenatchee Redevelopment Plan. This option is not consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, although it is close at some levels. The costs for this option are within the same magnitude of costs for widening and Confluence Parkway.</p>	<p>This alternative fails to meet screening criteria as described in the analysis. However, this alternative was the precursor to development of the Confluence Parkway option given the benefit of a bypass corridor for traffic flow and safety.</p>

<p>3 – Confluence Parkway Corridor as presented in the 2011 North Wen. Ave. Transp. Master Plan</p>	<p>This alternative provides a direct bypass connection between Miller and the US 2 – 97A interchange with a bypass route along the east side of the tracks along the Horan Natural Area. A RR underpass takes the alignment to the west side of the RR Bridge for a new Wen. River bridge crossing. The alignment then goes through the Horan block following the RR Tracks to connect with Euclid Avenue.</p>	<p>This bypass option does improve traffic carry capacity by providing an uninterrupted flow of traffic without business access. This option is particularly beneficial to Link Transit commuter busses by avoiding delay caused by multiple lights and business side friction. This alternative connects the Miller Street area directly with the Odabashian Bridge and 97A interchange and bypasses the US 2/Easy Street. This option provides safety improvements along the N. Wenatchee Ave. corridor by separating through traffic from business destined traffic. This option provides good improvement for emergency access given it connects directly to the Odabashian bridge and 97A interchange. The bypass route in this location supports economic development on the waterfront and in Olds Station by providing better access in and out of the city as well as across the BNSF railroad mainline. This option is identified in the North Wenatchee Redevelopment Plan as providing a new front door to the city. This option is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. This option is along the edge of the Horan Natural Area and has the opportunity to enhance the natural area and the loop trail. The biggest concern about this option is impacts to the Horan Area under enhancing the community screening criteria. This option was evaluated for engineering geometric feasibility and was determined infeasible at the Wenatchee River in the Risk Assessment. It was determined not feasible to build a RR underpass on the south side of the Wenatchee River and meet elevation requirements to cross the river.</p>	<p>This option is not viable due to geometric and engineering infeasibility at the location of the Wenatchee River crossing.</p>
<p>4 – Confluence Parkway as presented in the 2017 Risk Assessment.</p> <p>This option was developed after further review of alternative 3 in which it was determined to be geometrically</p>	<p>This bypass alignment connects Miller to the US2 – 97A interchange and is modified to follow the east side of the tracks along the Horan area and the Confluence St. Park camping area. This alignment includes a new Wen. River bridge located</p>	<p>This bypass option does improve traffic carry capacity by providing an uninterrupted flow of traffic without business access. This option is particularly beneficial to Link Transit commuter busses by avoiding delay caused by multiple lights and business side friction. This alternative connects the Miller Street area directly with the Odabashian Bridge and 97A interchange and bypasses the US 2/Easy Street. This option provides safety improvements along the N. Wenatchee Ave. corridor by separating through traffic from business destined</p>	<p>This alternative meets the screening criteria and is consistent with the purpose and need. However, impacts to the Horan area and the Wenatchee Confluence State Park must be fully analyzed and</p>

impossible to build a RR underpass just south of the Wenatchee River.	between the pedestrian bridge and the RR bridge.	traffic. This option provides good improvement for emergency access given it connects directly to the Odabashian bridge and 97A interchange. The bypass route in this location supports economic development on the waterfront and in Olds Station by providing better access in and out of the city as well as across the BNSF railroad mainline. This option is identified in the North Wenatchee Redevelopment plan as providing a new front door to the city. This option is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. This option is along the edge of the Horan Natural Area and Confluence State park and has the opportunity to enhance both key community facilities. The biggest concern about this option is impacts to the Horan Natural Area and the Wenatchee Confluence State Park camping area under enhancing the community screening criteria. The costs for this option are within the same magnitude of costs obtainable for the community.	investment will be necessary for minimization and mitigation to ensure the park and natural areas at the confluence of the river are made whole and/or enhanced.
5 – Pershing Extension to Chatham Hill.	This alternative improves and extends Pershing Street to a new Wen. River bridge which then connects with Cordell Ave. In the Chatham Hill neighborhood.	This option provides improved mobility for transit and traffic as a bypass to N. Wen. Ave., but not to the degree of options 3 and 4 given it does not connect to the 97A interchange. However, this option does provide good pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from neighborhoods. This option does not provide connection to the waterfront and does not provide additional connectivity. This option does provide safety improvements to N. Wen. avenue as a bypass; however, safety is a concern with putting high volumes of traffic into residential neighborhoods along Pershing and in Chatham Hill. This option fails to meet mobility and safety objectives. This option provides marginal emergency vehicles access improvements compared to options 3 and 4. This option does not enhance economic vitality to the degree of options 3 and 4; however, it does avoid impacts to business that option 1 and 2 create. This option fails to meet the City's comprehensive plan and fails to enhance the community by impacting established neighborhoods with an inability to mitigate those impacts reasonably.	This alternative fails to meet screening criteria and thus is not consistent with the purpose and need for the project.



## **Public Engagement in Alternatives Screening**

The development of the [North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan \(2011\)](#) included numerous public outreach and engagement efforts. Appendix A of this plan summarizes the public engagement which included review of alternatives, specifically the initial alternatives and the development of bypass options.

The 2017 [North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Risk Assessment](#) include engagement with key agencies for informal discussions about the environmental risks associated with the various alternatives. This effort included meetings with both the Yakama Nation and the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Chelan PUD, and Washington State Parks. Additionally, a preliminary scan of cultural resources was performed to determine if there were key cultural resources that would prevent the project from moving forward. This study was performed with the intent of laying preliminary ground work to begin the NEPA process in which further public outreach would occur.

In 2018, the City and WSDOT partnered to perform preliminary design work associated with improvements to North Wenatchee Avenue. This work included an extensive online open house as well as physical open house meeting. The Confluence Parkway concepts were presented at these meetings, recognizing that North Wenatchee Avenue and Confluence Parkway work together to address the principles outlined above. The online open house was visited by over 2300 users and resulted in 766 completed surveys, the results of which supported the proposed approach and proposed improvements.

It is important to note that the planned improvements to North Wenatchee Avenue are intended to compliment the new Confluence Parkway alignment as the preferred alternative. The planned improvements for North Wenatchee Avenue do not create significant long-term capacity improvements. They only address minor interim capacity issues and provide for increased safety, mobility, and access control.

In April of 2019, the City held a public meeting at the Confluence Technology Center to introduce the NEPA process and answer questions as well as present the preferred alignment. This meeting resulted in a packed meeting room at the Confluence Technology Center and many comments were received.

In November of 2019, the Chelan PUD held an open house concerning the Horan Natural Area. The City was present with a booth to provide information for Confluence Parkway. Again, there was great attendance and much discussion around enhancement for the area.

The City has desired to make this project highly public and has done so through public meetings, radio, presentations to service clubs, working with legislators, and solicitation of support letters through grant applications. This project is of the scale and importance to the region that broad based community support is the key to success.

The city is also keeping a website up to date to report out on the NEPA process [www.wenatcheewa.gov/confluenceparkway](http://www.wenatcheewa.gov/confluenceparkway). Additional public meetings are planned to share results of technical studies. Furthermore, minor shifts in the alignment of the roadway are expected by working through the NEPA process.

## **Conclusion**

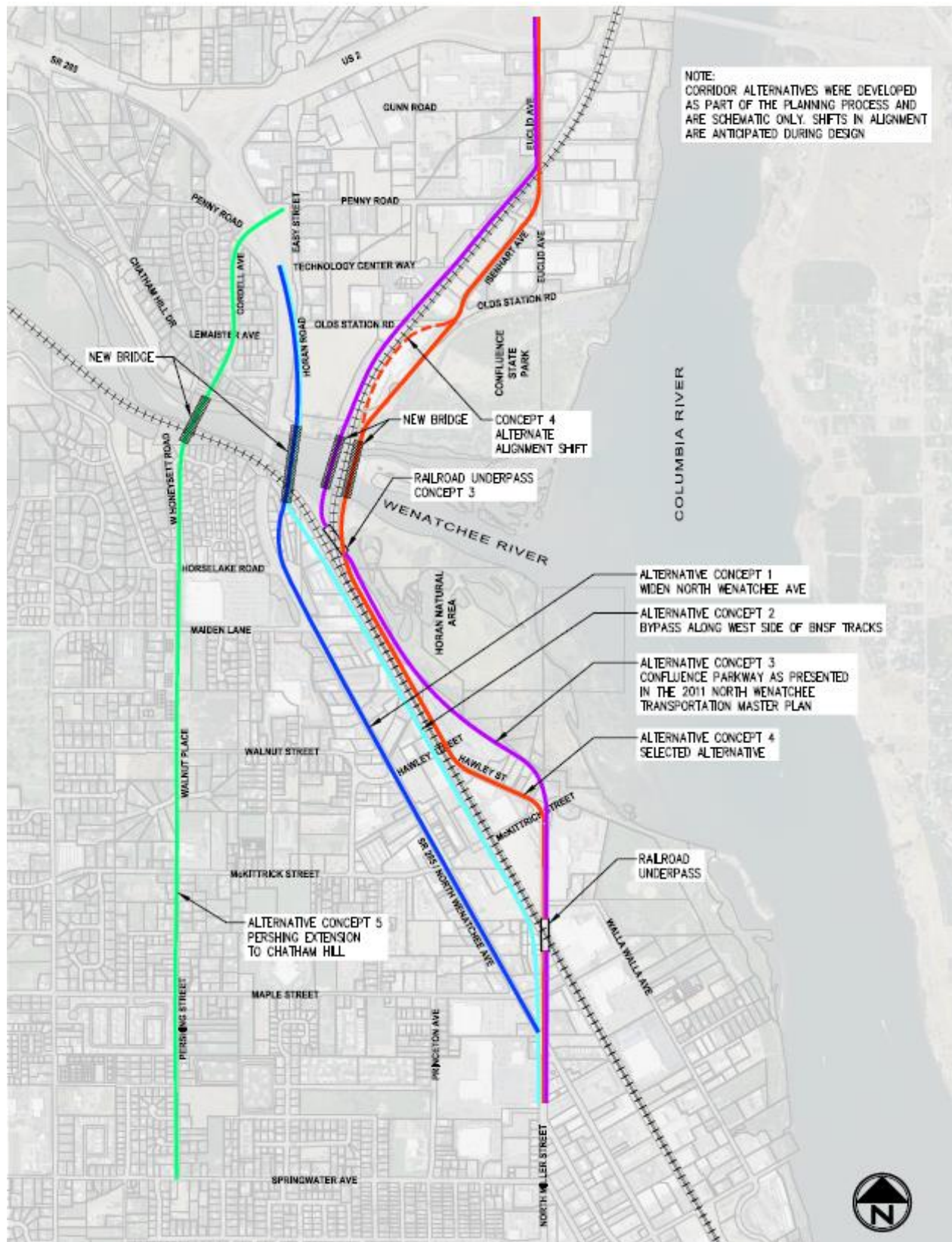
Given the magnitude of this project and the important needs the project must solve, the City of Wenatchee, in partnership with the Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council, has been analyzing the transportation needs in the North Wenatchee corridor for well over 10 years. The local transportation planning process resulted in a total of nine alternatives that have been evaluated against seven screening criteria to determine which best meet the transportation needs in the corridor. That screening process identified the Confluence Parkway as the only viable alternative that meets the purpose and need, as demonstrated in this summary.

As the NEPA process continues, the impact analysis will influence design adjustments and enhancements to create a project that meets the identified needs, minimizes environmental impacts and is well supported by the community. Further, it is expected that mitigation measures will be required and opportunities to enhance impacted resources will be created as design progresses. The City intends to implement a thoughtful and sensitive design process, which will be coordinated with the NEPA process so that the two processes are linked and iterative. This document provides a concise summary of the options considered, leading to the outcome of the preferred option to be put forward for NEPA evaluation.

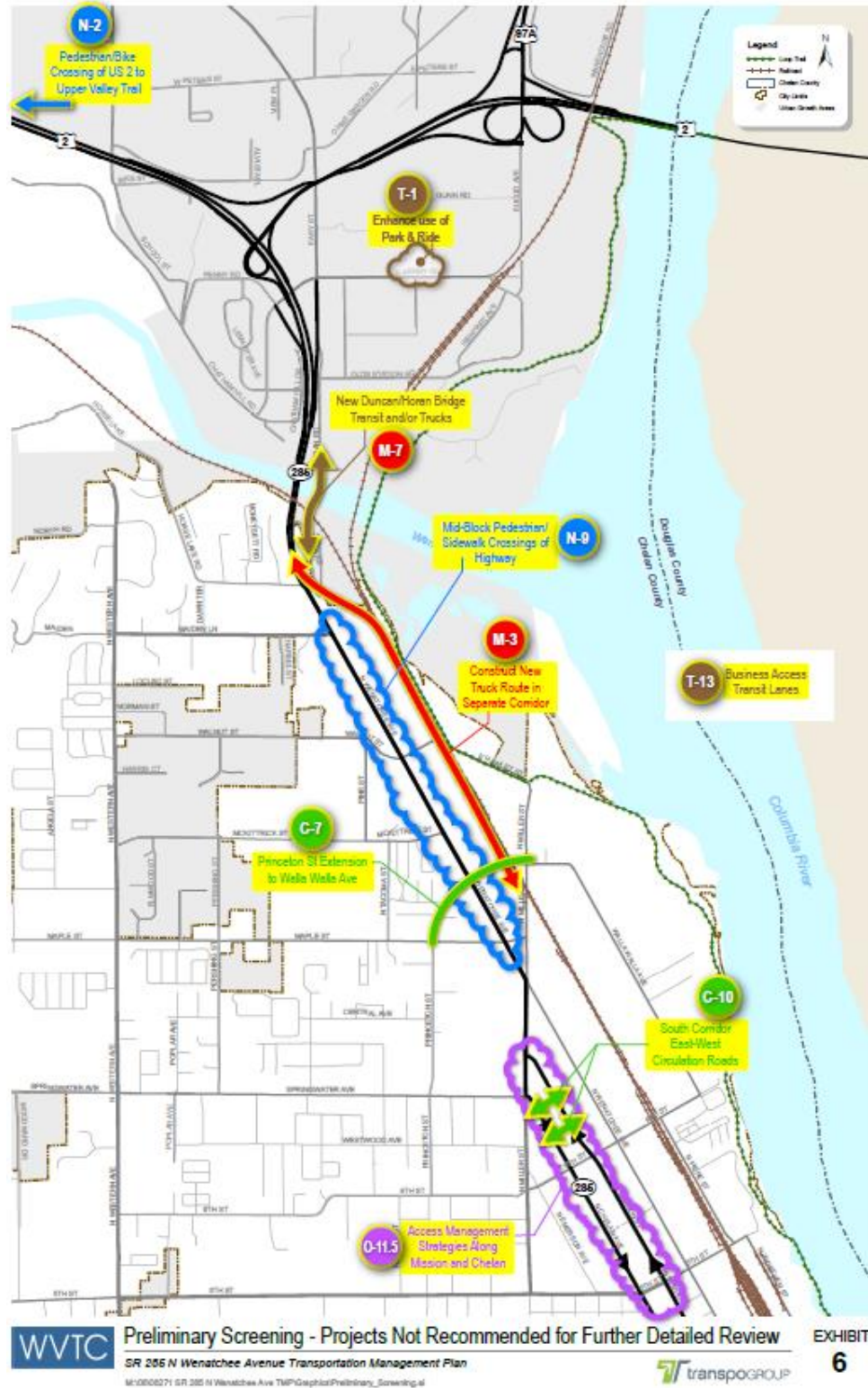
## **Attachments**

1. Depiction of Alternatives Screened Through Transportation Planning – Bypass Route Options
2. Preliminary Options Evaluated During North Wenatchee Avenue Planning (2011)
3. Preliminary Improvement Concepts Evaluated During North Wenatchee Avenue Planning
4. Confluence Parkway – Preferred Bypass Solution to North Wenatchee Avenue (2011)
5. Refined Confluence Parkway Alignment (Pre-NEPA Risk Assessment, 2017)
6. Purpose and Need Statement



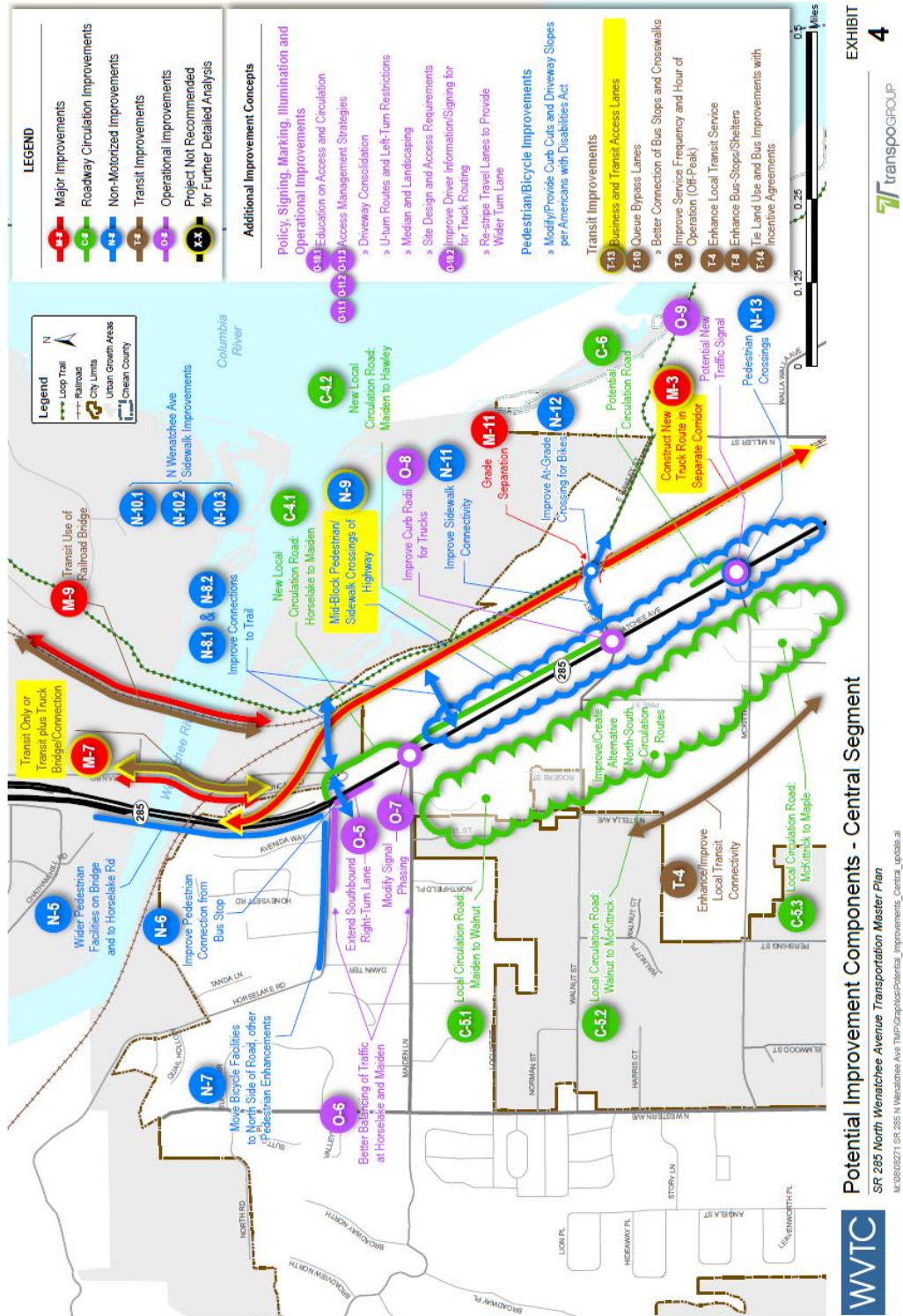


### Depiction of Alternatives Screened Through Transportation Planning – Bypass Route Options



Preliminary Options Evaluated During North Wenatchee Avenue Planning





# Potential Improvement Components - Central Segment

SR 285 North Wenatchee Avenue Transportation Master Plan  
 M:\0805271 SR 285 N Wenatchee Ave TMP\Graphics\Potential\_Improvements\_Central\_Update.ai



Preliminary Improvement Concepts Evaluated During North Wenatchee Avenue Planning





Confluence Parkway – Preferred Bypass Solution to North Wenatchee Avenue



*Refined Confluence Parkway Alignment (Pre-NEPA Risk Assessment, 2017)*



## Confluence Parkway Project

# NEPA Purpose and Need Statement

### Project Location

The Confluence Parkway Project (Project) is located in the City of Wenatchee (City). Wenatchee is located in a valley in central Washington at the confluence of the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers. Currently, Wenatchee is the second largest city in central Washington, drawing people from all over the region with agriculture playing an important role in the economy. The City experienced its largest population increase between 1990 and 2000, growing by more than 6,000 to a population of 27,856. Today, the population of Wenatchee is 34,530.

The Project is part of the North Wenatchee Capacity Improvements Project proposed by the City on behalf of the region and Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council to relieve traffic congestion and address projected traffic volume growth on State Route (SR) 285 (also called North Wenatchee Avenue within the Project area) consistent with the 2017 North Wenatchee Master Plan adopted by the Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council.

### Existing Conditions

North Wenatchee Avenue is a convergence point for traffic within Chelan and Douglas counties. The existing SR 285 Wenatchee River Bridge is four lanes wide and forms one of the two roadway connections in and out of the City (the other being the Sellar Bridge across the Columbia River at the south end of the City). The North Wenatchee Avenue corridor is currently the region's primary traffic bottleneck affecting residents, businesses, and visitors throughout Chelan and Douglas counties.

The North Wenatchee Avenue corridor serves, and will continue to serve, much of the travel demand for Wenatchee's growing economy. The Project area is in-filling with mixed-use development and expanded industrial and commercial uses as provided for in the 2016 North Wenatchee Master Plan, all of which are currently dependent on North Wenatchee Avenue as the sole route across the Wenatchee River and through the North Wenatchee area.

The Wenatchee Waterfront is redeveloping as provided for in the 2004 Wenatchee Waterfront Subarea Plan. This plan envisioned a transition from industrial uses to a higher-intensity mix of uses along the waterfront, including expanded parks and recreational facilities and public spaces. The area includes a mix of high-voltage distribution and transmission lines, fiber telecommunication infrastructure, portions of the Apple Capital Loop Trail, Wenatchee Confluence State Park and Horan Natural Area, and important cultural and environmental resources that all require a balanced approach for public access via both motorized and non-motorized modes.

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## Project Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to create a new bypass corridor to SR 285 (North Wenatchee Avenue) in Wenatchee, Washington. The new bypass corridor would provide needed capacity for general purpose, freight, non-motorized (pedestrian and bicycle), and public transit traffic in order to accomplish the following:

- Relieve existing congestion and address predicted travel demands for traffic entering and exiting the city to and from the north.
- Improve and sustain the viability of the transportation backbone of the valley. Improvements to North Wenatchee must work in conjunction with past investments and planned future investments included in the regional transportation plan, Transportation 2040.
- Improve connectivity and safety for people moving along and across SR 285 and adjacent roadways, trails, bikeways, and walkways in the north-end corridor, for all modes of travel.
- Provide a third access point to serve as an emergency evacuation route in the case of future wildfire disasters.
- Provide improved transit operations and pedestrian access to transit stops for both local routes and commuter routes serving outlying communities and reduce the potential for service delays.
- Support the viability of the business district on the North Wenatchee corridor and support economic growth and development in the North Wenatchee corridor and the region. This includes providing safe and improved non-motorized access to the redevelopment area identified in the 2016 North Wenatchee Master Plan while also increasing traffic capacity.
- Improve rail and roadway user interactions and safety. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) Mainline is a barrier for access to the Wenatchee Waterfront.
- Provide safe and improved pedestrian and bicycle access for residents and visitors to residential, commercial, recreational, and cultural facilities along the Wenatchee Waterfront.

## Project Need

The Project need has been established in several planning studies including the 2011 North Wenatchee Transportation Master Plan and the 2016 North Wenatchee Master Plan. The project is needed for the following reasons:

- Future travel demands along North Wenatchee Avenue would increase travel times, exacerbate existing access and safety issues, and hinder economic development throughout the region. Implementing the Project would improve north-south capacity for general purpose and freight traffic, support economic development by facilitating travel between regional employment centers, and improve conditions for the automobile-oriented businesses along North Wenatchee Avenue by alleviating congestion.
- North Wenatchee Avenue will experience significantly increased capacity constraints from 2030 to 2040 due to growth in regional population and employment, exacerbated by the lack



of any parallel roadways that cross the Wenatchee River. Adding roadway capacity in the North Wenatchee corridor will improve the level-of-service of North Wenatchee Avenue, resulting in fewer delays and reduced trip lengths while improving access to businesses along the corridor.

- Implementing the Project would improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility along and across the corridor by providing upgraded or additional walkway and bikeway facilities, improving connectivity, addressing associated safety considerations, and providing for a better overall pedestrian and cyclist experience. Furthermore, improved walkability and non-motorized access is expected to enhance economic activity and future development in the North Wenatchee corridor and Wenatchee Waterfront.
- Demand for public transit in the Project area has increased rapidly in recent years because of population and employment growth, traffic congestion, and demographic trends, which has resulted in delays in transit service within the Project area. Maintaining transit service in the outlying areas is particularly important because there are fewer route options. Implementing the Project would reduce the potential for service delays or cuts in the future.
- The North Wenatchee Avenue corridor experiences a significant number of collisions each year. Implementing the Project would provide for a significantly safer experience for drivers and pedestrians by improving traffic flow and reducing potential automobile, pedestrian, and railroad conflicts.
- SR 285 forms the sole link across the Wenatchee River, and there is no alternative evacuation route for the north half of the City during routine life-saving emergency responses or citywide disasters or a significant flash flood event from the canyons. There is also no redundancy in the current roadway network should the existing SR 285 bridges require repairs. Implementing the Project would improve safety conditions and transportation redundancy in the Project area.